

RENO GAZETTE-JOURNAL

August 9, 2007

Union's Goal: Bring Students Together

By Lenita Powers
Reno Gazette-Journal

The amenities sound like something you'd find in a hotel-casino or a movie star's home: a ballroom, a theater, cozy fireplaces and a view of the mountains.

These are some of the features University of Nevada, Reno students can expect to enjoy when the new Joe Crowley Student Union opens this fall.

UNR student leaders and administrators said it will transform the campus.

"It will create a new atmosphere for cultural life and conversation, sort of the living room for the campus," said Sarah Ragsdale, president of the Associated Students of the University of Nevada.

"It's really inspiring to see a completely student-initiated and student-funded project that was started by the ASUN in 2002 taking shape and nearing completion," she said.

UNR President Milton Glick said the new building will be a place where students will want to congregate and remain on campus for events and performances. He said that's critical to making the university "a sticky campus," one that engages students rather than just a place to take classes and leave.

The \$65 million, four-story student union was financed by student fees and will be twice the size of the existing Jot Travis Student Union.

Student leaders voted to name their new building in honor of Joe Crowley, who served for 23 years as UNR's president and still lives in Reno.

Chuck Price, director of the Student Union, pointed out some of the highlights Wednesday during a tour of the building.

They include: a ballroom on the top floor that can be used for student events and also rented out to high schools that don't want to hold their proms in casinos; a great room for dinners, receptions and special events; and a sports grill that will give students younger than 21 a place to eat, watch TV and play billiards, table tennis and video games.

The student union also has outside terraces where students can sit and a patio for events such as outdoor movie showings, barbecues and pre- and post-game activities.

But Price said the "heart of the building" will be the third floor, which will house the offices of the ASUN, the Graduate Students Association and the Center for Student Cultural Diversity.

Rebecca Bevans, president of the graduate students, said there also will be a designated lounge for the first time just for graduate students.

"We do spend a lot of evenings and weekends on campus, so this will be a nice place for graduate students to go and study," Bevans said.

In 2008, the old student union will become the site of the Davidson Academy of Nevada for profoundly gifted middle and high school students, which is at UNR's KNPB-TV building. It also will house other UNR programs.

The food court in the old student union will remain there, but some of the food retailers could change, Price said.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- A main entryway with a water fountain and a skylight that spotlights the University of Nevada, Reno logo embedded in the floor
- Two-story bookstore with fireplace, clothing, computer sales and a convenience store
- A variety of retail food spots, including Starbucks, Keva Juice, Port of Subs and a sports grill with adjoining recreation room
- A 1,200-seat grand ballroom on the top floor with view of the Sierra
- A 220-seat, two-level movie theater
- The "Sierra Wall," inlaid wood artwork depicting the Sierra on an interior wall that spans up the building's entire four stories
- Conference rooms, a formal reception room, outdoor seating and program areas for speakers and concerts
- A bank, copying/mailing center and testing services
- Environmentally friendly building with xeriscaping, recycled materials used throughout building and in furnishings and energy-efficient systems for power, heat and cooling